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Top Headlines

Chosun Ilbo

"Survival of the Fittest:" ROK's Leading Industries, Including Semiconductors and Shipbuilding, Increasing Global Market Shares, with Global Rivals Faltering Amid Economic Crisis

JoongAng Ilbo

ROKG's Efforts to Front-load Budget Spending in First Half of This Year Moving at a Snail's Pace

Dong-a Ilbo

ROK Fast Becoming a Multicultural Society; Policies Needed to Support Multicultural Communities

Hankook Ilbo

No Economic Recovery Expected Until Late 2009 or 2010

Hankyoreh Shinmun

Korea University Found to Have Ranked High Schools for Special Admissions for 2009

Segye Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun

Number of Horrific Psychopathic Crimes on the Rise; It is Time for Society to Come Forward to Prevent Such Crimes

Domestic Developments

¶11. According to an ROKG source, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will visit the ROK in the middle of this month. The source was quoted as saying: "The U.S. State Department has told Seoul that Secretary Clinton will visit the ROK as part of her first world tour. We understand that she will also visit Japan and China in addition to the ROK." (Chosun)

¶12. The ROK Defense Ministry said yesterday that there have been no unusual moves by North Korea since it threatened on Jan. 30 to scrap all political and military accords with the ROK, including one related to the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the West Sea, the de facto sea border between the two Koreas. (JoongAng)

¶13. In a related development, Deputy State Department Spokesman Robert Wood said in a Jan. 30 regular briefing: "North Korea's belligerent rhetoric toward the ROK is distinctly unhelpful." (Hankyoreh, Segye)

¶14. According to Radio Free Asia (RFA), the State Department has decided to directly aid ROK human rights groups for North Korea by providing two ROK groups with \$1 million each. This development indicates that the Obama Administration places high value on improving North Korea's human rights situation. (JoongAng)

International News

¶11. According to White House Spokesman Robert Gibbs, President Barack Obama, in a Jan. 30 telephone conversation with Chinese President Hu Jintao, reaffirmed the importance of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. This is President Obama's first remark on North Korea since taking office. (Chosun)

Media Analysis

North Korea

North Korea's Jan. 30 threat to scrap all political and military accords with the ROK, including one related to a western sea border, called the Northern Limit Line (NLL), received wide coverage today and over the weekend. The ROK Defense Ministry was widely quoted as expressing deep regret over Pyongyang's threat, while vowing to respond resolutely to any intrusion. Deputy State Department Spokesman Robert Wood was also quoted as saying in a Jan. 30 regular briefing: "North Korea's belligerent rhetoric toward the ROK is distinctly unhelpful."

Most of the ROK media viewed this latest North Korean threat as indicating that North Korea is now heightening the level of threats from non-military measures, such as expelling ROK officials and entrepreneurs from the North, to the military sphere, and the media expressed concern about a possible armed conflict between the two Koreas. Conservative Chosun Ilbo commented that Pyongyang might be aiming to consolidate its grip on power ahead of leader Kim Jong-il's 67th anniversary. Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized on Jan. 31: "It is easy to guess North Korea's intentions. It wants to increase tension, to pressure the ROK to change its North Korea policy and to justify hard-line measures it plans to take. The North may also attempt to cause divisions in our society or draw the attention of the U.S. since a new administration has taken office. This is truly regretful. No good can come from military clashes, whether large-scale or small. It is high time for Seoul to make serious efforts to prepare conditions that are conducive to dialogue. An obstinate partner will not come to the negotiation table just because it was urged to do so." JoongAng's Senior Journalist Kim Young-hie also opined today: "North Korea seems to be making a miscalculation that steps like issuing a series of provocative statements would turn the ROK's North Korea policy back to the level of the 'Sunshine Policy' (of engagement with North Korea.) However, the Lee Myung-bak Administration, backed by an absolute majority of conservative voters, will never yield to pressure from Pyongyang and return to a North Korea policy of ten years ago. What serves the North's national interests is for the North to resume dialogue with the ROK and to accept the U.S.'s calls for nuclear verification. Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun asserted

in an editorial: "The ROKG is trying hard to show a calm attitude, faced with the North Korean threat. It is a policy of standing by and ignoring things, expecting that the weaker North will eventually submit first. There is also a deep-seated belief that it is no big deal if inter-Korean relations deteriorate further as long as cooperation between the ROK and the U.S. remains strong. This is the wrong attitude. Neither ROK-U.S. relations nor North Korea-U.S. relations can substitute for inter-Korean ties. Furthermore, as could be seen in the Bush Administration's early policy toward North Korea, a policy of standing by and ignoring (North Korea) is just another name for a policy of antagonism."

Conservative Chosun Ilbo today gave attention to press remarks by White House Spokesman Robert Gibbs, in which he said that President Barack Obama, in a Jan. 30 telephone conversation with Chinese President Hu Jintao, reaffirmed the importance of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula.

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo, meanwhile, gave attention to a Jan. 30 Radio Free Asia (RFA) report saying that the State Department has decided to directly aid ROK human rights groups for North Korea by providing two ROK groups with \$1 million each. JoongAng commented that this indicates that the Obama Administration places high value on improving North Korea's human rights situation. In a related development, conservative Dong-a Ilbo's editorial today noted Deputy State Department Spokesman Robert Wood's Jan. 29 press remarks that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has expressed considerable concern over the human rights situation in Pyongyang, and commented: "The Obama Administration should make it clearer to North Korea that there will be no improvement in relations with North Korea until the communist state fundamentally changes its positions on the nuclear and human rights issues."

Opinions/Editorials

The North's Provocations (JoongAng Ilbo, January 31, 2009, Page 26)

Yesterday, North Korea took measures that will only increase tension between South and North Korea.

Pyongyang announced it would nullify all existing agreements aimed at resolving inter-Korean political and military confrontations, and abrogated all clauses related to the Northern Limit Line, the two Koreas' border on the Yellow Sea.

The North justified its decision by saying there is no reason for only North Korea to be bound by agreements while the South continues politics of confrontation.

North Korea makes impossible demands.

North Korea has never faithfully carried out any agreements with South Korea, except those that would benefit the North. Nevertheless, Pyongyang lays the blame with our government. It's easy to guess the North's intention. It wants to increase tension, pressure the South and justify hard-line measures leading to provocations.

It may also attempt to cause divisions in our society or draw the attention of the United States now under control of a new administration.

This is truly regretful. Does North Korea truly believe that provocations can resolve inter-Korean issues? Does it plan to undertake all conceivable measures to see if South Korea will give in? Pyongyang's attitude makes inter-Korean issues look like a farce within the international society.

We urge the North to take a more serious and sincere attitude toward inter-Korean issues. Whether it occurs in quarrel or battle, confrontation never resolves problems. War and confrontation are the very reasons for South and North division. There is no other way besides dialogue to resolve issues. Only when we engage in dialogue can we hope to improve inter-Korean relations.

We have a few words for our own government as well. North Korea has

been pushed into a corner and therefore has become obstinate. Just as it has done for the past year, the North will only increase its pressure on us. There is no guarantee that it won't close the Kaesong Industrial Complex.

No good can come from military clashes, whether large-scale or small. A responsible administration will not neglect inter-Korean relations and allow them to get worse, all the while stating that it will teach the North a lesson not to keep asking for the impossible.

An obstinate partner will not come to the negotiation table just because it was urged to do so.

Because South Korea is better off, we must be careful not give the impression that we push through what we want using power. It is important to make serious efforts towards creating an environment conducive to dialogue.

* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

Inter-Korean Relations Cannot Be Resolved with a Strategy of Waiting

(Hankyoreh Shinmun, January 31, 2009, Page 23)

Inter-Korean relations have continuously deteriorated since the Lee Myung-bak Administration took office, and they are now facing a new hurdle. The Committee for Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland statement released by North Korea yesterday is at a different level from previous measures. They declared a complete invalidation of all agreements made so far to reduce the political and military standoff between the two Koreas and of provisions regarding the Northern Limit Line in the West Sea. If this is interpreted as written, we are returning to a Cold War era standoff situation where a military conflict could erupt at any moment over the NLL. The CPRF statement says that "the indiscriminate anti-North Korea confrontational maneuvers by the South's conservative authorities" have "driven inter-Korean relations to the worst possible state, one close to war." But the statement itself harms inter-Korean relations.

This aggressive action by the North is regrettable. The agreements made thus far between South and North are not things that can be done away with through a statement of invalidation by either side, and as the agreements are disregarded, the damage to both sides inevitably becomes greater. It's also unpleasant to see the statement repeatedly using such coarse expressions as "the traitor Lee Myung-bak."

The North Korean statement had several effects in mind. First, we see an intention to inform the new U.S. administration of the seriousness of the Korean Peninsula issue, leading to early direct negotiations, and achieve solidarity internally. Of course, the biggest goal is to apply pressure so that Seoul changes its policy toward North Korea. Pyongyang has consistently demanded respect for and sincere adherence to the October 4 and June 15 joint statements, and this statement, too, is an extension of that. Thus, the core of the North's claim is that "since the South is not adhering to the two statements, we are not going to follow other agreements either."

The South Korean government is trying hard to show an unperturbed face with regard to this statement. It's a policy of standing by and ignoring things, expecting the weaker North ultimately to submit first. There is also a deep-seated belief that it is no big deal if inter-Korean relations deteriorate further as long as cooperation between South Korea and the United States remains strong. This is the wrong attitude. Neither South Korea-U.S. relations nor North Korea-U.S. relations can substitute for inter-Korean relations. Also, as could be seen in the George W. Bush Administration's early policy toward the North, a policy of standing by and ignoring (matters) is just another name for a policy of antagonism.

The key to resolving the situation is in the government's determination toward the October 4 and June 15 statements. Even if there were no pressure from the North, the two statements should be

adhered to properly, and the government's policy toward North Korea should be changed. The government's contradictory attitude, speaking of inter-Korean mutual benefits and common prosperity while in fact pursuing confrontation and letting the situation worsen, must cease. Simply waiting without any other plan is the worst possible strategy.

* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

■N. Korea Must Stop Its Pointless Threats
(Chosun Ilbo, January 31, 2009, Page 27)

North Korea's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland in a statement on Friday declared "all agreements related to the dissolution of inter-Korean political and military confrontations nullified" and that "the basic inter-Korean agreement and the provisions concerning the maritime military demarcation line contained in an appendix to the agreement are all scrapped." The North, the statement said, will not observe agreements concerning "recognition and respect of the other's system," "non-interference in the other's domestic affairs," "prohibition of slander and defamation," "prohibition of acts destroying or overthrowing the other party" and "prevention of military confrontations," provided for in the July 4, 1972 Joint Statement, the 1992 Basic Agreement between North and South Korea and the Oct. 4, 2007 Summit Declaration. This is an unacceptable attempt to bully the South into submission.

North Korea has repeatedly raised concerns over the Northern Limit Line, the de facto sea border between the two Koreas. On Jan. 17, a spokesman for the North Korean People's Army, appearing on television in uniform for the first time in 10 years, said it will only recognize the maritime military demarcation line the North unilaterally drew up. The Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland chimed in the same day and declared the NLL nullified. North Korean forces have habitually violated the NLL, causing two naval clashes in June 1999 and June 2002. Between October and December last year, North Korean offensives were concentrated on inter-Korean projects like the joint Kaesong Industrial Complex. But as our government has declined to concede, the North has shifted the direction toward the NLL.

If the North violates the NLL or stages military demonstrations on the maritime border, we could see more military skirmishes like the first and second Yeonpyeong naval clashes. A Defense Ministry spokesman said North Korean incursions will be dealt with "firmly." North Korea must realize that the NLL is an inviolable line. The South must be thoroughly prepared, but preventive diplomacy is also needed. We should prevent an increased security risk in this economic crisis.

The North is keen on dialogue with the new U.S. Administration. Leader Kim Jong-il in a personal letter to Chinese President Hu Jintao on Jan. 23 said that he wants "no tension on the Korean Peninsula." But a week later he is back to brinkmanship tactics. The U.S. and China must tell Pyongyang clearly that it cannot hope to profit from military provocations or threats against the South. And Seoul should map out better and more diverse ways of persuading the North to accept our offer of dialogue.

* This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.

It Would be Difficult for North Korea to Hold Direct Talks with U.S. If It Continues Its Human Rights Abuses
(Dong-a Ilbo, February 2, 2009, Page 31)

Acting State Department Spokesperson Robert Wood said on January 29 that U.S Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is deeply concerned about North Korean human rights abuses. He emphasized that the North Korean human rights issue is evidently part of an overall review process for steering the ties between the U.S. and Pyongyang.

For now, North Korea may be exhilarated by the end of the Bush Administration and the emergence of President Barack Obama. But through this short remark about North Korean human rights abuses,

the Obama administration clearly hints that the N.K is misguided.

With President Obama taking office, North Korea seems to hope to improve the nuclear negotiations and the U.S and North Korean relations through direct talks with the U.S. On January 30, the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea announced North Korea's unilateral renouncement on the agreement, saying that North Korea will invalidate all agreements regarding resolution of political and military confrontations. This announcement apparently is related to such expectation from North Korea. However, this is a threat to the Lee Myung-Bak government and an outdated ploy aimed at holding direct talks with the U.S while bypassing the ROK.

The North Korean human rights record is the worst even among socialist countries of the world. A great number of North Koreans are escaping from their country at the risk of their lives due to the tyranny of the Kim Jung-Il regime and starvation. Political detention camps for anti-government activists in North Korea are a living hell where famine, terror, violence, torture and deaths are common. Even if the U.S. and South Korean governments engage in a dialogue with North Korea, both governments should clarify that they would not tolerate North Korea's human rights violations. This would prevent the ROK and U.S from being stigmatized as a sinner in history.

North Korea has been unleashing a barrage of threats against the ROK around the inauguration period of the Obama Administration. But the ROK and U.S governments should not be swayed by this North Korean gambit. It is ridiculous to expect North Korea to make changes while tolerating absurdity and its arbitrary denunciation of the agreement. The Obama Administration should enlighten North Korea more clearly that Pyongyang would not see any improvement in relations with the U.S until it makes radical changes in the nuclear and human rights issues.

Winning over Obama
(JoongAng Ilbo, February 2, 2009, Page 31)

By Son Ki-sup, a professor of diplomacy at the Pusan University of Foreign Studies

The Obama Administration sees Japan as an ally in the same class as NATO members. But it only sees Korea as a "partner."

The election of an African-American to the presidency of the United States surprised the world to the extent that it is not just considered a change of administration, but a change in the course of history. Since his inauguration, President Obama has been displaying dedication to unity and understanding to a degree that far exceeds our expectations, embracing his foes and his friends at the same time.

The same may be said of the new administration's foreign policy. Unlike his predecessor, Obama values international cooperation above all else, one that is based on the foundation of responsible sovereignty and smart power. In this regard, there is a high possibility that the United States will seek more cooperation from its allies, such as Korea and Japan.

The Japanese government has long been afraid of diplomatic shock waves passing through Washington. What Tokyo fears most is a sudden dramatic improvement in Sino-American relations.

The "Nixon shock" in 1972 and the "Clinton shock" in 1998, with American presidents suddenly announcing visits to China, are prime examples.

As such, the Japanese government seems to now be fidgeting, fearing that the new American administration may bring an "Obama shock."

But such a shock seems to be less of a possibility if we take a closer look at the main characteristics of Obama's choices of diplomatic personnel, as well as his administration's foreign policy towards Japan.

Influential figures with a deep knowledge of Japan have been called on to fill the top East Asia foreign policy positions on Obama's

diplomatic team.

Joseph Nye, a Harvard professor and former assistant defense secretary, was designated as the next ambassador to Japan, and Kurt Campbell, a policy expert and distinguished authority on Japan, was appointed U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Nye played a pivotal role in redefining and strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance by releasing the Nye Report in the '90s and the Armitage Report in the 2000s. He is also an advocate of smart power, insisting that the U.S.-Japan alliance should not depend on military strength, but should use economics and culture for diplomatic means. U.S.-Japan relations are united in a willingness to draw on smart power.

America has clarified its position that it will place a high value on its alliance with Japan. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said at her confirmation hearing at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the U.S.-Japan alliance will provide a foundation that can contribute to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

The tasks facing America are enormous: economic recovery, an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, prevention of terrorism and weapons proliferation, and putting a stop to global warming. The global economic behemoth that is Japan is an indispensable ally in achieving these goals.

However, as the supremacy of the United States is rapidly weakening, there may be perpetual friction between the two nations. The Obama Administration will call on Japan to strengthen its role in official development assistance and peacekeeping operations. In particular, Washington is looking for an increased Japanese contribution to the war in Afghanistan.

If Japan takes a passive stance toward America's demands, it will naturally lead to a regression in the relationship between the two countries.

Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party holds the key. Following the short-lived Abe and Fukuda Administrations, the current Aso cabinet is also on the verge of collapse.

The Liberal Democratic Party faces a growing likelihood that it will lose the coming election, and the opposition Democratic Party led by Ichiro Ozawa will most likely win.

However, regardless of a switchover of political regimes, the U.S.-Japan alliance will remain unchanged in Japanese diplomacy. We need to pay attention to the fact that an Ozawa Democratic Party alliance would also fall within the field of Obama's vision for implementing smart power diplomacy in East Asia.

The Obama Administration has clearly declared that Japan is an ally in the same class as members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Meanwhile, it only sees Korea as a "partner."

Under the Obama Administration which sets a higher value on Japan and China, U.S.-Korea relations may be demoted to a lower rank.

To prevent this, we should strive to foster closer ties with the United States to ensure that our strategic alliance with the United States will be elevated to a security and value-oriented alliance that guarantees peace and prosperity in East Asia. To this end, we can first propose providing assistance to the U.S. efforts in Afghanistan.

* We have compared the English version on the website with the Korean version and added the last sentence to make them identical.

Features

Why Is North Korea So Fretful?
(JoongAng Ilbo, February 2, 2009, Page 2)

By Senior Journalist Kim Young-hie

News Analysis

When it seems that you are blocked in every direction and things do not go as planned, you feel a sense of being under siege. In this case, you usually vent your feelings toward the people closest to you. It could be your family or friends. When you make someone a scapegoat for your misfortunes, you can breathe a sigh of relief. If you are lucky, the weak-minded could even appease you with material compensation. The North Korean leadership appears to have a collective sense of being under siege.

Neither surprising nor unexpected was a January 30 statement from the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea that all the agreed-upon points concerning the issue of putting an end to the political and military confrontation between the North and the South will be nullified. On January 17, the North Korean military already declared an all-out confrontational posture against the ROK. While we were wondering what step North Korea would take next, the statement came. This means that North Korea will no longer abide by the agreements reached in the 1990s and 2000s, under which the two Koreas stopped denouncing each other and recognized the Northern Limit Line (NLL) as the western sea border, but will continue to provoke the ROK at will. This is manifestation of its anxiety.

There must be reasons for North Korea's irritation and frustration. First, North Korea was infuriated with the sending of anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border by civic groups, the ROKG's co-sponsoring of a UN resolution on North Korean human rights, President Lee Myung-bak's statement on November 16 that the ultimate goal of the South is reunification under a free democratic system, and the National Intelligence Service's leakage of its intelligence on the health of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. Second, Pyongyang was disappointed at the prospect that the Obama Administration may not give priority to the issues pertaining to North Korea. North Korea had been encouraged by President Obama's indication of high-level talks, including a summit, between Washington and Pyongyang, on his campaign trail. However, North Korea's expectations were not realized when the North Korean nuclear issue was pushed to the back burner due to the financial crisis and Israel's invasion of Gaza. Adding to this was the speculation about the decline of North Korean leader Kim's health.

North Korea needs to hold the U.S.'s attention. When the denuclearization talks continue, North Korea expects that heavy fuel oil and food will flow into the country, and Pyongyang anticipates normalization of ties with the U.S. and the ensuing political and economic benefits. The North Koreans are accustomed to an absolute decision by its head of state. Therefore, they believe that every foreign policy is determined and implemented only by the White House. They do not understand the sense of autonomy which will be exercised by the Clinton-led Department of State. When confirmation hearings for officials down to the level of Assistant Secretary are completed by mid-March, the Clinton-led foreign policy team will clarify the position of the new USG toward the North Korean nuclear standoff, an issue that President Obama cannot afford to pay attention to. North Korea's disappointment and anxiousness is too hasty.

North Korea seems to be making a miscalculation that steps like issuing a series of provocative statements and suspending the tourism project at Kaesong and train services between Seoul and Shinuiju would revert the ROK's North Korea policy back to the level of the Sunshine Policy. The North does not seem to grasp the ROK's political situation at all. The Lee Myung-bak Administration was born out of complaints about the liberal and conservative inclinations of the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun Administrations. Although North Korea may miss the days of the two previous administrations, the Lee Myung-bak Administration, backed by an absolute majority of conservative voters, will never yield to pressure from Pyongyang and return to the North Korea policy of ten years ago. If North Korea is to bypass the South to reach the U.S., it must be because the North does not know that the ROK and the U.S. share values in their alliance. What serves the North's national interests are the following two points: resuming dialogue with the ROK and accepting the U.S.'s calls for nuclear verification.

Stephens

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